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ABSTRACT

The instructional concept guide is part of a system developed for tutor training and support. It is primarily designed for volunteers, but it can also be adapted to the training of paraprofessional tutors for any type of adult literacy program. A key component in the system is the Tutor Support Library, consisting of Instructional Concept Guides (trianing and reference aids for tutors) and Functional Content Units (models for the practical application of tutoring skills). Guide Four suggests sources of assistance with tutoring problems. In information addressed to the tutor, the following step-wise plan for identifying and solving problems is presented: reviewing records kept on tutoring activities, seeking the student's view of the situation, stating the problem in writing, and consulting with the tutor supervisor. Possible problem areas and aids to finding solutions are discussed including finding and selecting materials for instruction, seeking information from outside agencies, becoming personally involved in students' problems, and making the student aware of community services from which he may benefit. Appended are sample listings of service agencies found in most communities. (Author/MS)

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TUTOR SUPPORT LIBRARY

Instructional Concept Guide No. 4

HELP

Inside and Outside the Tutoring Agency

by

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Susan Strader
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FOREWORD

The ability to read has been taken for granted in the United States for as long as most of us can remember. Unfortunately the "us" in the previous statement refers to those in the population who are indeed able to read --- for example, those of you reading this message. Adult readers make up an exclusive fraternity and seldom find themselves involved with non-readers. But in this century the tempo and technology of American life have increased dramatically. And more and more we see that a significant proportion of our citizens do not have the reading ability society requires.

In the 1970's, the Community Based Division of the Right to Read Effort addressed itself to overcoming what is rapidly becoming a crisis in the area of adult literacy. A common bond for many of the projects supported by this division of Right to Read is the use of volunteer tutors to teach the older, out-of-school individual who needs reading help. It has been generally found that, while the desire to tutor may be "born," the ability to tutor needs to be "made." Consequently the cry has gone out, "We have the volunteers but we do not have a system for training them to tutor."

RALSU, the Regional Adult Literacy Service Unit, a Right to Read Community Based project, has therefore accepted as its major responsibility the development of a tutor training and support

system. It is primarily designed for volunteers, but it can also be adapted to the training of para-professional tutors for any type of adult literacy program. The complete system includes tutor training, a support system for the working tutor, and evaluation strategies for both programs and tutors.

A key component in the system is the TUTOR SUPPORT LIBRARY. This consists of two series of units entitled Instructional Concept Guides and Functional Content Units. The Concept Guides orient and train beginning tutors and serve thereafter as reference aids for the on-the-job tutor. The Functional Content Units are designed as models for the practical application of the teaching skills gained in the tutor training. For convenience, all Guides and Units are separately bound.

The Instructional Concept Guide that follows this "Foreword" is one of the following:

1. Getting Together: Establishing a Working Tutorial Relationship
2. Teaching One-to-One: A Diagnostic Approach to Beginning Tutoring
3. Student-Centered Tutoring: Using Initial Lesson Results to Set Future Goals
4. Help: Inside and Outside the Tutoring Agency
5. Process and Product: A Guide for Assessment of Community Tutoring Programs
6. Word Concepts: An Adult Approach to Decoding Skills
7. The Teaching of Sight Words: Ways and Means
8. The Language Experience Approach: Application for Tutoring Adults in Reading

9. The Directed Reading Approach: A Lesson Organization Procedure Adapted for Use with Adults

10. The Newspaper: A Source of High-Interest Instructional Material for Adults

11. Resources: A Guide for Using Published Materials in Adult Literacy Programs

12. Splitting Up: Terminating a Tutoring Relationship

Guide 1 is an orientation to tutoring; Guides 2 and 3 lead the tutor through the first sessions with a student. Except for Guides 1, 2, and 3, however, the booklets need not necessarily be presented in consecutive order. Guides 6 through 10, for example, explain in detail teaching procedures that can be used to teach the lessons described in Guides 2 and 3. Other Guides, as their titles imply, deal with supplemental helps for the tutor and with program assessment.

Hopefully, these materials as a whole will satisfy a long felt need expressed by many persons involved in the management of adult literacy programs. It is also hoped that the flexibility of format will make the publications adaptable to individualizing requirements within programs.

HELP

Inside and Outside the Tutoring Agency

Problems Will Arise

No matter how beneficial the tutoring experience is for both tutor and student, problems will arise from time to time. It is necessary, therefore, to be prepared for these problems and to know where to look for help. Because each student's needs are individual, no tutor guide nor training session can provide all the answers. You, as the tutor, must realize that asking for help is not a sign of weakness. Rather, it demonstrates your willingness to adapt to the individual student's needs and expectations. Admitting to your student that you do not know everything about teaching reading, for instance, is perfectly acceptable provided you show you are willing to go to the trouble of learning more. There is nothing wrong with not knowing, only not seeking help. As a matter of fact, this sort of openness helps build the element of trust into the relationship.

When trouble does arise, the first need is to define the problem. After all, unless you know what a problem consists of, you will not know where to look for possible solutions. So, if you have a feeling that the situation with your student is not quite

as it should be or find yourself often wondering if you really are giving this student what he needs, you need to take action.

Your first line source of help is the tutoring log. A review of how the student reacted to different activities may give you a clue as to the nature and cause of a problem. (Again, carefully kept and objective records of tutoring are essential. Log notes should record what your student actually said as well as facts about his behavior; not your conclusions about your student's feelings.) Often the process of reviewing the log for pertinent information will show that a student has been developing a pattern of need over a period of time. This, in turn, may suggest possible changes that would solve the problem.

If your log review does not give you the help you need, the next step is to discuss the matter with the person who, besides yourself, is most vitally involved --- your student. You may be able to "get at" the problem in this way. Working together, try to pin down the trouble by stating the problem in words you both understand; after the verbalizing, write it down. The mere act of writing it out sometimes helps. In any event, having the problem objectively defined and officially recorded will give input to other persons who might be able to advise you.

The TUTOR SUPPORT LIBRARY is another source of help for you. (A complete listing of the booklets that deal with general and instructional aspects of tutoring is found in the "Foreword" to this Guide.) Even though you have read the booklets previously, without the present problem in mind, you may have overlooked

information that could be useful in solving it. In general, the Instructional Concept Guides can help you deal with personal relationships with your student and how to teach him effectively. The second set of booklets in the LIBRARY, Functional Content Units, have lesson ideas that combine high interest life-coping skills with basic reading instruction. For example, look for ideas in these booklets on finding and keeping a job, filling out applications, or using the telephone. The Functional Content Units can also serve as models for helping you develop lessons on almost any subject of special interest to your student.

If you cannot reach a solution as a result of the log review, discussion with the student, and using the TUTOR SUPPORT LIBRARY, you will need to look further for help. Within every tutoring agency there should be a regularly operating structure for helping tutors when they are unable, for any reason, to cope with a problem.

A Friend Indeed!

The role of the supervisor in a tutoring program is designed to provide immediate, firm, and basic structure to the ongoing, everyday activities. This includes:

(1) On-the-spot assistance during tutoring sessions

(2) Special help to tutors about methods and materials

(3) Seeing that accurate records on tutors and students are kept

(4) Selecting and maintaining a support library relevant and useful to all branches of the agency program

In addition to these four areas, the supervisor also usually acts as a personnel advisor, placing students with tutors in the effort to achieve a "match" in which the maximum possible help is both given and received. When personality conflicts come up, the supervisor works as a counselor. If a comfortable solution cannot be reached, it becomes the supervisor's responsibility to move the student to another tutor. Informal after-tutoring meetings or regularly scheduled trouble-shooting sessions should be available for tutors so that they may conveniently request help from the supervisor.

While the supervisor has a responsibility to help, you, as a tutor, must also be responsibile in how and why you ask for help. For example, if the instructional materials are too difficult for your student and you need help in finding something easier, then the following procedure would be appropriate. Think the problem through first, prepare written notes on it, then contact your supervisor. Together you should survey the materials available to try to find something suited to your student's needs. Should the problem involve, instead, your ability to handle a specific teaching method covered in training sessions, the tutor supervisor may suggest material which will further explain the method to you. Or if it is a need for more complex instructional techniques than those covered in the basic training sessions, the supervisor may arrange for more training for you. Be prepared to work cooperatively with your supervisor in all instances. To be successful, the supervisor/tutor team must be just as "caring" about mutual needs

and problems as the student/tutor team. Working together benefits all concerned.

Occasionally, both the tutor supervisor and the tutor trainer see a problem that requires expertise beyond their own abilities. Many agencies have access to colleges and universities or state and federal agencies that can provide consultant help expert in the problem, whether it be tutor training or other difficulties encountered within the program.

Concerned tutors should realize that, through the network of agency personnel, assistance is available, and they should feel free to use it. This knowledge should not, however, keep a tutor from exploring several avenues on his own to work out a problem. In fact, many tutors have as ready (or even greater) access to community resources as does the agency staff.

Finding and Selecting Materials for Instruction

One of the most frequent problems encountered by a tutor is that of appropriate materials. Because the society in which the adult poor reader lives is tuned to a population of normal readers, materials which are easy to read are sometimes difficult to find. The individual adult also tends to have quite specific reading needs. Therefore, finding materials which meet these needs and at the same time are written at a low level of reading difficulty may present problems.

Help with materials is as available as help with teaching problems. A wealth of published material for use in adult literacy

programs is available. The difficulty which confronts you, as a tutor, is in the selection. From the materials immediately available, it is necessary to pick those which will work best in tutoring your student.

The TUTOR SUPPORT LIBRARY booklet, Instructional Concept Guide No. 11, "Resources: A Guide for Using Published Materials in Adult Literacy Programs," provides direction in selecting and using materials. Brief annotations are included that describe the materials listed. Each item is coded as to the stage of reading development (difficulty level) for which it is most useful as well as according to functional interest areas. For ideas and guidance in using a specific instructional material that is widely available, namely, your local newspaper, read Instructional Concept Guide No. 10, "The Newspaper: A Source of High-Interest Instructional Material for Adults."

If the adult literacy materials available to you within the tutoring program do not fit your student, however, you will need to go outside the tutoring agency for what is needed. In some cases, you will be looking for published materials that can be found in other places. (The Guide on materials can be a continuing help there.) In other cases, you will be looking for materials that are not generally included in the realm of "school books." Your own common sense and ingenuity need to be called upon then. The following section will provide a starting point for you.

Looking Outside

Public libraries offer a wealth of materials and services. Check with librarians and explore the shelves yourself. For example, if your student is interested in finding a job and wants to know how to successfully handle an interview, the public library may have pamphlets and booklets on the skills needed for the job as well as on interview techniques. A library also has easy-to-read books for adult pleasure reading. Taking your student with you to the library can be a profitable experience for him. Showing him that a librarian is someone who can help is important; you can help additionally by making the acquaintance a personal one. If transportation presents problems for your student, explain the bookmobile service to him and give him practice in using it.

Federal agencies often provide pamphlets that are useful reading material for adults. Some of these agencies are funded through grants on the local level, making them readily accessible. Examples are Action - RSVP and Twilight Improvement Associations, both of which have reading materials for senior citizens. The U. S. Government Printing Office, of course, has much inexpensive or free material available. Tax forms and instructions may be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service. State and local employment agencies have pamphlets for the asking. The Extension Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, as well as health care and legal aid offices, publish helpful material, some of which is easy-to-read, some of which can be adapted for poorer readers.

Banks have free pamphlets on savings and checking accounts

as well as tips on budgeting money. Most banks also will provide loan information packets on request. Credit and loan associations sometimes give similar material. Because the non-reading adult often has difficulty managing money, these materials may be especially useful in developing relevant lessons.

Automobile dealers give free promotional literature with excellent pictures that may be used to stimulate language experience stories. These materials are colorful and contain information that will intrigue many adults. Motorcycle and bicycle shops are another source. Service guides or outdated repair manuals may be obtained from machine and auto shops. Technical schools in the area may be able to help you obtain free pamphlets on job training opportunities in the automotive (as well as other) fields.

Some large corporations advertise their products via pamphlets and brochures. A collection of these provide motivating and colorful reading matter. Businesses such as oil companies, electronics, and public utilities often prepare informative, non-technical material on scientific subjects which you may obtain upon request from their public service divisions.

The Dead Letter Office of the U. S. Postal Service gives undelivered third class mail --- advertisements, magazines --- upon request. Extra or unsold and outdated magazines may also be obtained from newsstands, doctors' offices, or tutor agency patrons.

In short, the byword in finding materials is ask. Most agencies and people in the community are more than willing to help in

providing materials if they know the cause is worthy. Usually their only request is that you do try to use what is given. Use your imagination to create materials when necessary, but do not overlook what is available in your community.

Personally Involved

While it is not unusual to become aware of your student's personal problems after a period of time, a word of caution is necessary. You should recognize that if you become too involved in his personal problems, the tutoring relationship will suffer. Although your relationship is friendly, it is not a therapy session. A non-reading adult has a hard time coping with society. You can readily see how personal problems might often result. Therefore it is all the more important that the tutoring sessions do not add to, but instead relieve, those problems.

Personal trust between tutor and student is absolutely necessary. However, one-to-one tutoring can foster rather difficult situations at times. The possibility of personal conflict does exist. Should you become involved in a situation in which you have tried you best to establish good rapport with a student, but the rapport just does not seem to be developing, then consult your supervisor.

There may be any number of reasons why you and your student do not get along. Sometimes you may feel openly hostile toward one another. Obviously, then, a change is necessary. Were you to try to continue, you would both suffer, and neither of you would

make any progress in his learning-to-read process. Under these circumstances, the tutor supervisor should consult with you both individually, study your log record to try to gain insight into the nature of the problem, and then assign the student to another tutor. As a tutor, you should not take this as a personal insult, but merely as one method of dealing with a difficult problem. Some people simply work better with certain types of individuals. Racial prejudice, sex prejudice, class consciousness, or any other social bias may surface in tutoring sessions. The realization that a tutor is not expected to be a counselor, trained to deal with such problems, is essential from the very beginning.

Occasionally a person finds it too much of a strain to work as a tutor with certain individuals. The pressure may be caused, again, by any number of reasons, definable or indefinable. A tutor may feel he is much too concerned with the personal problems of his student, yet unable to stop worrying about them. Such feelings are inevitably destructive to progress and should receive immediate attention. Therefore, if the personal aspect of your tutoring relationship is not a healthy one, consult your tutor supervisor. If the sessions must be terminated, Guide No. 12, "Splitting Up: Terminating a Tutoring Relationship," gives further guidance.

Keep in mind always that because a student is a poor reader, the daily tasks of living in a reading society present compounding problems --- he can't read --- so he can't get a job --- so he can't support his family --- so he can't apply for help --- because he can't read. This cycle is repeated daily for millions of adults.

The tutoring itself is the attempt to break the cycle so that this individual may function more effectively.

Community Services

Earlier it was stated that students' personal problems should be kept in perspective. That does not mean that there is no room in tutoring to help a student deal with his daily life. From conversations with your student, you may see the need for specific help. For example, say you were to learn that your student's family is suffering because he cannot find work. You probably would plan lessons that might help him find a job. But you could also include lessons to make him aware of community and federal aid that might reach immediate family needs, such as food stamp programs, Family and Children's Services, Health Department Services, and other welfare programs. Each tutoring agency should have a file of such agencies, their services, locations, and hours of operation. All tutors should have access to the file so that a student may be referred to a given agency and perhaps helped to fill out the necessary application forms. However, be careful not to insist that the student consult these agencies, since some may have personal reasons for not doing so. Do, however, present the information as tactfully as possible so that the student may take the initiative himself if he so desires. Then help in whatever way he requests. This may be in the form of completing forms, supplying a telephone number, or telling him which bus to take to reach the agency.

In some cases your student may wish to have your help in making the agency contact. His sense of fear about asking for help should be understood and accepted. You can help prepare him for such encounters through lesson activities and role playing. (Be sure his fear is real. Some students simulate fear as a socially acceptable way to let you know they do not really want to accept or even seek this means of help.)

The community service file maintained by a tutoring agency should include information similar to that listed in the form below.

1. Agency Name
   Address
   Telephone
2. Director or Contact Person
3. Hours
4. Function
5. Geographic Area Served
6. Eligibility
7. Fees
8. Application Procedure
9. Major Source of Support

Many communities have "human resources" directories that give information such as this. The armed forces (U. S. Department of Defense) prepare lists of agencies for communities near which they have installations. Some church and civic groups also keep lists of local agencies. If no such service is currently available in

your community, developing a directory would be a useful project for a volunteer agency.

It is convenient to keep the community service file on large index cards arranged alphabetically by topics. The following list is an example of relevant topics which should be included in a file in a tutoring agency in a medium to large city:

1. Abortion
2. Adoption
3. Aged - Institutions and Services
4. Alcoholism and Drug Addiction
5. Chamber of Commerce
6. Child Development Services
7. Clinics, Hospital and Outpatient Services
8. Community Centers and Services
9. Community Nursing Service
10. Cooperative Extension Service
11. County Health Department
12. Courts
13. Dental Health Service
14. Department of Family and Children's Services
15. Department of Human Resources
16. Department of Inspectors
17. Education
18. Emergency and Disaster Services
19. Employment Services
20. Family Planning
21. Government Agencies
22. Handicapped
    a. Mentally
    b. Physically
23. Housing Authorities
24. Information and Referral Services
25. Legal Services
26. Libraries
27. Museums
28. Parks and Recreation
29. Planning Agencies
30. Rehabilitation and Correctional Institutions
31. Veterans' Services
32. Vocational Training and Counseling

The appendix of this booklet has sample listings of agencies available in most communities.

Summary

Help is where you find it. Sources of assistance exist within the agency in which you tutor and also can normally be found in many shapes within the community. Knowing where to look for help is important. Look first to yourself and the records you have kept on tutoring activities. Rereading these notes may put the difficulty into focus and suggest action. If reviewing the information by yourself does not answer your questions, include your student. He may be able to help you understand the difficulty by adding his view to the picture. In both of these approaches to problem solving, it is useful to try to state the problem in writing. If that can be done, it is much easier to move on to the next level of help: the tutor supervisor. Your written statement defining the problem will aid the tutoring agency person charged with supervision of tutors to better understand the difficulty, and thus enable him to more efficiently suggest possible solutions. A solution may be for you to reread training materials which discuss the problem you are facing. It may also be that additional resources or further training will be suggested. The supervisor may suggest you go outside the tutoring agency for help, such as to a consultant who works with the agency or to a community agency that deals with your student's particular difficulty. (Consulting a directory of community services may help locate agencies of this type.) Whatever steps are taken, asking the tutor supervisor to help with your problem will always be a step forward.

While it is vital that you know where to seek help, it is even more important that you be willing to seek help. A volunteer tutor is not expected to be all-knowing. In fact, the very nature of the job description --- one who is willing to give a share of himself --- indicates that a volunteer has limits. These limits are understood and expected by the agency in which you work. It is up to you to let agency personnel know when a limit has been reached so that they may provide the needed support. No question is improper; no problem is too small. By being open and willing to seek help, you can avoid becoming one of those volunteers who excuses himself from the tutoring program on some invented pretext rather than to admit having trouble dealing with his student's problems. Keep on the positive track you started when you entered the ranks of volunteer tutors:

WHEN HELP IS NEEDED, LOOK FOR IT!

APPENDIX

Sample Listings of Service Agencies to be Found in Most Communities

1. Alcoholics Anonymous

   1525 Random Avenue
   Your City, State

   Mr. M. T. Glass, Director

   HOURS: 24 hour service

   FUNCTION: A society which seeks to obtain sobriety for alcoholics who have a sincere desire to quit drinking

   AREA SERVED: County

   ELIGIBILITY: Anyone interested in sobriety for alcoholics

   FEES: None

   APPLICATION PROCEDURE: Just come to a meeting

   SOURCES OF SUPPORT: Self-supporting

2. Central Drug Clinic

   2913 Straight Street
   Your City, State

   Mr. U. N. Hooked, Director

   HOURS: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm weekdays; 11:30 am to 11:00 pm weekends

   FUNCTION: Provide counseling, methodone, group sessions

   AREA SERVED: City

ELIGIBILITY: Anyone on drugs

FEES: None

APPLICATION PROCEDURE: Come in; referred by court

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: HEW and State

3. Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Social Security Administration

4912 Local Lane
Your City, State

Mrs. S. S. Number, Director

HOURS: 9:00 am to 4:45 pm, Monday thru Friday

FUNCTION: To administer the Old Age, Survivor's and Disability Provision in the Federal Social Security Act, and perform other departmental tasks as assigned, such as Medicare

AREA SERVED: County

ELIGIBILITY: Retirement benefits - must be over 65. Survivor's benefits - a widow may receive benefits for herself and/or her children until these children reach 18, and 22 if child continues his/her education. Medicare - 65 and over.

FEES: None

APPLICATION PROCEDURE: Call or write office

SOURCES OF SUPPORT: Old age and Survivor's Insurance, Disability Insurance Trust Funds (U. S. Treasury Department)

4. Family Planning Project

7848 Parental Place
Your City, State

Mrs. N. O. Moore, Director

HOURS: 8:30 am to 5:30 pm Monday thru Friday

FUNCTION: Provide family planning, birth control for male and female, hysterectomy and vasectomy counseling, and abortions.

AREA SERVED: County

ELIGIBILITY: Anyone

FEES: None

APPLICATION PROCEDURE: Make an appointment

SOURCES OF SUPPORT: Federal

5. Mental Health Center

9965 Center Street
Your City, State

Dr. Eve N. Keel, Director

HOURS: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday thru Friday

FUNCTION: Information and referral service for those who need help.

AREA SERVED: County

ELIGIBILITY: Anyone

FEES: None

APPLICATION PROCEDURE: Call for appointment, or emergency walk-in

SOURCES OF SUPPORT: Cooperative agreement with health department, regional and University hospitals